

CHARLES TAYLOR MASTER MECHANIC'S AWARD

**Fairbanks Flight Standards District
Office Honoree 1999**

MERLIN BARKDULL



BARKDULL, MERLIN. Merlin was born October 1, 1928, in Shelley, Idaho. His aviation career began when he joined the U. S. Navy in 1948 and was sent to the Navy Aircraft Engine School. He served four years in the Navy, 1948 - 1952, working as an aircraft and engine mechanic. His duty station was primarily at the Naval Station at Barbers Point, Hawaii, with deployment to Tachikwa and Autsugi, Japan, for 13 months. However, he did spend some time at the Kodiak Island, Alaska, and Whidby Island, Washington, Naval Stations. He worked mostly on PB4Y2 and P2V-3 aircraft.

Merlin and his wife, Katherine, were married in Idaho in 1953 and had five children, John, Jacqueline, Mark, Scott, and Matthew. There are now nine grandchildren and one great grandchild. From 1954 to 1956, Merlin attended Idaho State College Technical Institute and studied Airframe and Engine Maintenance. On June 3, 1955, he was issued his Mechanic Certificate with a Powerplant Rating and on June 18, 1956, he earned his Airframe Rating. On July 24, 1959, he received his

Inspection Authorization. Merlin's first civil aviation job was with Reeder Flying Service in Twin Falls, Idaho, in 1956. This was a crop duster who shortly closed down for winter months.

While still in school, Merlin received a job offer from Hawley Evans at Fairbanks Air Service, Fairbanks, Alaska. He accepted the job and pulled his 37 foot mobile home up the Alcan Highway with his 1950 pickup, "third gear all the way," he said. He arrived in Fairbanks on September 30, 1956.

Merlin worked for Fairbanks Air Service until 1960. From 1960 - 1965, he worked at the University of Alaska powerplant and did after hours work on local aircraft from his home garage. In 1965 and 1966 he taught an aircraft mechanic school in the Interior Airways hangar at Fairbanks International Airport. In 1967, Merlin began working for Interior Airways and when they purchased their first Hercules C-130, he went to the C-130 school in Georgia.

Merlin left Interior Airways in 1970 and worked a short time with Red Dodge at his "Herc" operations. During the 1967 flood in Fairbanks, Merlin volunteered his time back at his old University of Alaska power plant job to help keep it running. From 1970 to 1988, he worked for a variety of aviation operators in the Fairbanks area, all of which went out of business for one reason or another.

These included the following: 1970 - 1975, Joe Usibelli (Alaska Aviation Sales); 1975 - 1984, Air North; 1985 - 1988, Audi Air. These jobs included work on numerous type aircraft--DC3s, C-46s, Turbo Commanders, Fairchild F-27s, a variety of Cessna and Piper aircraft, and others too numerous to mention.

In 1988, Merlin went to work for Larry Chenaille at Larry's Flying Service, Inc. He still works there today, primarily as an engine overhaul and repair specialist. Merlin continues to maintain his home in

Fairbank where he has lived for 42 years.